



LETTERS

SHARPS INJURIES IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Managing risk of hepatitis B after sharps injuries

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Although Riddell and colleagues' timely update on managing sharps injuries is of great practical use, we have a couple of questions about the hepatitis B management algorithm based on the recipient's vaccination history.¹

The algorithm, based on UK immunisation guidelines, mentions two possible hepatitis B vaccination histories, one of which is two or more doses of vaccine. Does this mean that people who have received two or more doses are considered to be completely vaccinated and that immunisation of healthcare workers against hepatitis B should be restricted to two doses? This seems contrary to the European consensus of 2000, which recommends three doses as a primary course.²

Secondly, the recommendation is to consider a booster vaccine dose in known vaccine responders (anti-hepatitis B surface antigen >10 mIU/mL) who have received two or more doses of vaccine. Does it mean that known vaccine responders who have received three (or more) doses should be given a booster dose?

This also seems contrary to the European Consensus, which recommends no booster if the primary vaccination has been effective.² It is also not recommended by various European,³ US,⁴ and other national guidelines.⁵

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Riddell A, Kennedy I, Tong CYW. Management of sharps injuries in the healthcare setting. *BMJ* 2015;351:h3733. (29 July.)
- 2 European Consensus Group on Hepatitis B immunity. Are booster immunisations needed for lifelong hepatitis B immunity? *Lancet* 2000;355:561-5.
- 3 Puro V, De Carli G, Cicalini S, et al. European recommendations for the management of healthcare workers occupationally exposed to hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus. *Eurosurveillance* 2005;10:260.
- 4 CDC. CDC guidance for evaluating health-care personnel for hepatitis B virus protection and for administering postexposure management. *MMWR Rec Rep* 2013;62(RR-10):1-19.
- 5 De Schryver A, Claesen B, Meheus A, et al. European survey of hepatitis B vaccination policies for healthcare workers. *Eur J Public Health* 2011;21:338-43.

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